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LENDING

# Colombia Treats Water Maladies, Renovates Power Sector

The World Bank has approved four major loans, totaling $394.3 million, to boost Colombia's water supply and sewage treatment systems and to speed up the development of a mature and competitive electric power industry.

Untreated water is becoming a growing health hazard, as demand for water increases in Colombia, where diseases associated with unsafe water and inadequate sanitation are endemic. Two loans for $145 million, approved November 16, will help finance an ambitious water supply and sewage rehabilitation project benefitting over one million urban poor living in the outskirts of Bogota.

The project will help consolidate the institutional restructuring of Bogota's Water Supply and Sewerage company (EAAB) into a commercially run public utility. It will pave the way for greater involvement of the private sector in the provision of public utility services in Bogota.

The program has multiple components, says project manager R. Venkateswaran. "It will increase the efficiency of the water supply company, which lost almost 40 percent of its water in 1994; it has a health component, and it will contribute to the environmental protection of the Bogota river basin, where natural wetlands have disappeared and several species of fish and birds have become extinct."

World Bank

Digging out of poverty.

According to a study financed by the World Bank, 64 percent of the "lost" water can be explained by illegal connections, inaccurate consumer records, software tampering and faulty meters.

The project has a total estimated cost of $717 million and includes construction to reduce flooding. It will also rebuild and repair two of the city's three main water supply and distribution systems.

The two project loans are: a single currency, 15-year, $87 million loan on fixed-rate terms, with each semester's aggregate disbursement having a grace period and a final maturity of three years; and a single currency $58 million loan repayable in 17 years with a grace period of five years on LIBOR-based terms.

The Bank also approved two loans November 16 of $249.3 million to help the

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World Bank News *will not be published the week of November 30. We will be back December 7.*

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# A Tonic for the Power Sector

**COLOMBIA,** *from page 1*

government implement the next phase of power sector reforms by supporting institutional building and associated investments in power dispatch and energy control, and by facilitating the effective operation of a new bulk electric energy supply market.

The transmission and dispatch company ISA, the borrower, is upgrading its system in order to fulfill the requirements set out by new laws introducing competition, deregulating supplies to large consumers and regulating monopolies. ISA has operated independently from the main power generating company since May.

The loans will complement an energy sector technical assistance project, approved in December 1994, that includes assistance in setting up regulatory agencies, developing pricing policies, incorporating private capital, introducing competitive incentives, developing environmental regulations and guidelines, and drawing up management strategies. Another Bank loan is being identified to support efforts to increase private sector participation in the power distribution system.

The new loans will expand ISA's supervisory system, provide new equipment and set up a financial settlement center. They will strengthen transmission facilities and provide consulting services and training for network operators, dispatch coordinators and the clearing house.

One loan will consist of a $145 million US dollar single currency loan at standard LIBOR-based interest rate, the other will be a $104.3 million equivalent currency pool loan at the standard variable rate; both are repayable in 17 years, including a four-year grace period. □

☎ For more information *call Mario del Carril at (202) 473-6189, fax (202) 522-3698.*

# Donors Try To Head Off IDA Funding Crisis

Donor countries at a meeting in Luxembourg this weekend sought a fresh approach to funding the International Development Association (IDA) and expressed serious concern over the financial crisis now facing the concessional lender of the World Bank Group.

Representatives of 34 donors agreed on the importance of IDA, which provides interest-free loans to 78 of the world's poorest countries, and said they were concerned about the risk that IDA may not be fully funded, given uncertainties in contributions by the United States, traditionally IDA's largest contributor. Donors are seeking ways to ensure fairness in the replenishment process but without jeopardizing the poorest countries' access to adequate amounts of vitally needed credits.

The IDA deputies—officials representing their finance ministers—showed clear willingness to consider exceptional arrangements for funding mechanisms that would secure IDA's sustainability, Bank officials said after the meeting. World Bank Vice President for financial policy Johannes Linn said that donors were willing "to go an extra mile" in their search for a solution.

Donors will meet again in Paris December 14-15 to discuss a framework for adequate funding to finance planned loans to borrowing countries. Linn said he hoped a final agreement would be reached in the first few months of 1996. "We have to reach agreement very soon if we are to avoid starting to cut back on IDA lending from the first half of 1996," he said.

IDA lends selectively and takes into consideration, among other factors, a government's performance in poverty reduction, macroeconomic management and project implementation.

The donors are now in the process of negotiating the eleventh replenishment of IDA (IDA 11), which covers the period July 1996-June 1999.

IDA's concessional loans, called credits, mature over 35 to 40 years, with a 10-year grace period and a 0.75 percent service charge. These credits go to countries that had a per capita GNP below $865 in 1994. The average per capita income of IDA borrowing countries is $400 a year.

United Nations

IDA has distributed more than six million textbooks in Africa.

Since its founding in 1960, IDA has approved credits totaling some $90 billion and disbursed a record $5.7 billion in fiscal 1995. Yet the demands on IDA are increasing daily: seven new countries have became eligible to borrow from IDA since 1993, official development assistance is dwindling and the population in IDA-eligible countries is growing.

IDA loans have helped: reduce the number of malnourished children in 6,000 Indian villages by half; build more than 7,000 primary classrooms in rural Pakistan; distribute more than six million textbooks in Africa; print and distribute more than nine million books, periodicals and pictorials on health care and hygiene in China; provide technical assistance for a wide range of programs, from the fight against African River Blindness to the privatization of Albania's agriculture system. □

# High-tech Giants in Alliance for Development

## World Bank Harnesses Information for Growth

By combining their enormous potential, computer and telecommunication companies are radically changing the way the world conducts business. Yet the high-tech revolution must not bypass the developing countries, which cannot afford to miss the opportunities for growth offered by new instruments for sharing, obtaining and disseminating information.

To help the poorer countries harness communication and information technology in the service of economic development, top officials from a group of donor countries and leading computer and communications companies met in Paris November 13-14, under the auspices of the World Bank, and pledged initial funds of over $4.5 million to support the activities of Information for Development—or *info*Dev—an ambitious new high-tech development program launched at the initiative of the Bank in September.

The *info*Dev program, which will obtain additional resources as donors confirm their contributions, intends to make its own revolution by joining the technical expertise and interests of private investors, the development goals of public donors and the needs of developing countries. It will act both as a catalyst for funds and as a "clearing house" of knowledge and information on the evolution of telecommunications, generating ideas on the actions needed to bring developing countries up to speed on the so-called "information superhighway."

Twelve industrialized countries and 16 giants of the telecommunications and computer industries—including AT&T, IBM, Mitsubishi, Oracle, Siemens, TRT Philips and Hewlett-Packard—attended the Paris meeting, along with organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the European Commission, UNESCO, ITU and the Japanese industrialists' association, Keidanren. Donors recognized that the program needs to focus on poverty reduction and must address the exclusion of low-income countries and social groups from ongoing technological progress.

"It is truly a tremendous opportunity for developing countries to harness the new technologies," said James Bond, who is in charge of the project and is head of the Telecommunications and Informatics Division in the World Bank's Industry and Energy Department. At their first meeting, donors put forth a variety of suggestions and ideas, which will be discussed at a forum with developing countries in the spring of 1996.

World Bank

Developing countries must join the high-tech revolution.

Of the many projects on the table, three are considered likely candidates for approval next year, said Bond. "One is an African 'virtual university' program, that would provide cost-efficient, high-quality education to be distributed through interactive software, the Internet or low-technology delivery systems." A second project would link up all the environmental organizations, research institutes and universities in the Central Asian region surrounding the Aral Sea, which is dying because of excessive irrigation and pollution. The third would be a pilot project to bring computers into the classrooms in the Caribbean, so that students can learn the necessary skills for on-line services such as airline ticketing, financial data and toll-free numbers.

One immediate goal of *info*Dev, Bond said, is to increase awareness among developing countries and economies in transition of the opportunities offered by the new information infrastructure, and to build consensus on how they can benefit from it.

The program will also help design and implement reforms for the telecommunication sectors and new strategies for information infrastructure, and will support pilot projects that demonstrate how technology and information systems create new development opportunities.

Donors discussed guidelines for a selection of projects and reached agreement on priorities, with emphasis on assistance to less-developed countries. It was further agreed that *info*Dev would provide assistance to help developing country organizations articulate their problems in the sector, in order to encourage them to submit projects for funding. Developing countries will be represented at *info*Dev forums and will submit proposals to a work program. They will also be part of a Technical Advisory Panel that advises *info*Dev donors. □

☎ For more information *call James Bond at (202) 473-4522, fax (202) 477-0685.*

# Time for the Middle East to Reap the Profits of Peace

The international economy is like a bullet train, and it is up to the Middle East to build a station stable and secure enough so that the train will not bypass the region. This analogy was drawn by Ramzy Ramzy, of the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, at a recent panel on the economics of peace in the Middle East and North Africa.

All countries in the Middle East agree that the region as a whole must become a full participant in the global economy, he said. "And the importance of this should not be underestimated."

The prospects offered by peace, along with the reforms that must be implemented by the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), were the focus of the panel, sponsored by the World Bank and the Middle East Institute. Speakers included officials from the US State Department, the World Bank and the governments of Israel and Egypt.

The panel was part of an all-day conference on regional prospects for economic development in the MENA region, held at World Bank headquarters November 20.

Differing viewpoints of the economic effects of peace emerged at the panel. Moderator David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* said that the main peace dividend to emerge so far has been peace itself, while economic benefits have been slower to emerge. But Shlomo Gur of the Israeli Embassy said the economic dividends of the peace process—"which has passed the point of no return"—are already tangible, as demonstrated by the success of the October economic summit in Amman, Jordan, and by the gradual end of the Arab boycott against Israel.

Gur also cited the attendance of eight Arab League leaders at the funeral of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and of 2,000 businesses at the Amman summit as examples of events that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. He was echoed by Aaron Miller, a peace process negotiator for the US State Department, who said that people in the region "now have an economic stake in stopping the violence and in improving their own lives."

The changing responsibilities of political leaders, who must become more accountable for their economic performance, were addressed by Caio Koch-Weser, World Bank vice president for the MENA region. Until now, Koch-Weser noted, regional leaders have not been held responsible for delivering economic prosperity, because policies were dictated by politics and war. With the coming of peace, and with important developments taking place—such as the growth of a European-Mediterranean economic zone and the globalization of the economy—economic policy and performance have become the new litmus test for political leadership.

"Some leaders are getting the message," he said, citing Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco as three countries that are beginning to reap the benefits of far-reaching reforms.

He also emphasized the crucial role of water and relaunched a proposal to hold a regional water summit by the end of next year. The summit would draw up a charter for sustainable water management and a resource management plan, and would join donors, investors and the private sector in future projects. The World Bank, Koch-Weser said, is ready to continue working with its partners for lending, institution building and creating new partnerships in the region.

The opportunities and the challenges facing the region are many, and so are the rewards, if peace and economic reforms are consolidated before the bullet train arrives. □

## Commodity Prices Continue to Fall in Third Quarter

Commodity prices continued to decline moderately during the third quarter, when the World Bank index of non-fuel primary commodity prices averaged 3.1 percent lower than in the second quarter. Crude petroleum prices (not included in the non-fuel index) averaged 9.3 percent lower than in the previous quarter.

Agricultural raw materials led the weakness in commodity prices. Cotton prices averaged 17.5 percent lower than in the previous quarter on indications that new crop supplies would be adequate for consumption and moderate stock building. Natural rubber prices fell 22 percent during the period. Small-scale production surged in Malaysia and Thailand during the first quarter, boosting output in the two countries 24 percent over the previous year. Indonesian production is also recovering. The index for timber declined 3.2 percent, as marginal increases in log and sawn-wood prices in Europe offset most of the 16.5 percent decline in Malaysian log prices in Japan.

Food prices rose 6 percent in the quarter as grain prices increased sharply and offset lower beverage prices. World grain markets tightened further as continued US production problems indicated that global consumption would exceed production by 63 million tons in 1995-96. This gap would lower stocks to 13 percent of consumption this season, the lowest rate on record. All grain price averages continued to rise during the quarter. The weakness in beverage prices was led by coffee; mild coffee prices dipped 13.7 percent in response to declining consumption in some major markets and the ineffectiveness of the export retention program. Cocoa and tea crops are expected to be abundant this season, and prices fell 4 percent.

Fat and oil prices increased 3.9 percent, and the high grain prices will keep upward pressure on demand for soybean meal well into 1996. Sugar inventories are expected to hit a 10-year high of 34 million tons at the end of the crop year, and prices will continue to weaken.

Prices of metals and minerals (excluding steel), which rose early in the quarter, dipped in September as demand faltered. Still, the index registered a 3.5 percent average increase. World production of refined copper is outpacing demand, and prices reached a low for the year in October. Lagging construction and automobile production are holding down demand for aluminum.

Fertilizer prices remained firm, and prospects for next season are for strong demand and continued tight supply. □

# COMMODITY PRICE DATA

| Commodity | Unit | QUARTERLY AVERAGES Jan-Mar 1995 | Apr-June 1995 | Jul-Sept 1995 | MONTHLY AVERAGES July 1995 | Aug 1995 | Sept 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BEVERAGES** | | | | | | | |
| Cocoa | ¢/KG | 148.8 | 144.8 | 139.1 | 136.4 | 141.3 | 139.7 |
| Coffee: Other milds | ¢/KG | 383.5 | 367.4 | 318.4 | 321.1 | 337.8 | 296.4 |
| Robusta | ¢/KG | 303.0 | 304.6 | 268.2 | 264.0 | 287.0 | 253.6 |
| Tea | ¢/KG | 167.7 | 159.4 | 153.0 | 144.8 | 150.8 | 163.3 |
| **CEREALS** | | | | | | | |
| Grn Sorghum | $/MT | 102.2 | 108.1 | 121.7 | 119.1 | 118.7 | 127.3 |
| Maize | $/MT | 107.8 | 113.7 | 128.0 | 127.0 | 126.4 | 130.5 |
| Wheat: Canada | $/MT | 180.6 | 194.2 | 221.6 | 229.3 | 214.0 | 221.4 |
| *US HRW | $/MT | 153.6 | 159.2 | 189.6 | 190.7 | 184.4 | 193.6 |
| * US SRW | $/MT | 148.6 | 145.8 | 175.8 | 173.4 | 168.5 | 185.6 |
| Rice: Thailand | | | | | | | |
| *5% BOT | $/MT | 283.2 | 298.8 | 347.1 | 341.3 | 345.0 | 355.0[G] |
| 5% Indicative | $/MT | 281.2 | 299.5 | 348.3 | 345.6 | 339.5 | 359.8 |
| *35% Indicative | $/MT | 253.9 | 270.7 | 317.1 | 319.2 | 309.8 | 322.3 |
| *Al. Special | $/MT | 225.6 | 246.7 | 288.9 | 296.0 | 286.0 | 284.8 |
| **MEAT** | | | | | | | |
| Beef: US | ¢/KG | 213.1 | 184.0 | 173.9 | 168.9 | 173.1 | 179.7 |
| *Lamb | ¢/KG | 273.0 | 256.6 | 254.0 | 254.0 | 251.9 | 256.0 |
| **SUGAR** | | | | | | | |
| World | ¢/KG | 32.2 | 30.3 | 28.1 | 30.0 | 28.6 | 25.8 |
| EU Domestic | ¢/KG | 66.1 | 70.3 | 69.6 | 70.5 | 69.4 | 68.8 |
| US Domestic | ¢/KG | 49.8 | 51.0 | 52.3 | 54.0 | 51.7 | 51.2 |
| **FRUITS** | | | | | | | |
| Bananas | $/MT | 445.4 | 382.6 | 525.1 | 535.4 | 520.0 | 520.0[F] |
| Oranges | $/MT | 406.0 | 591.1 | 610.9 | 686.7 | 608.4 | 537.5 |
| **FATS & OILS** | | | | | | | |
| Palm Oil | $/MT | 667.7 | 622.3 | 619.0 | 655.0 | 616.0 | 586.0 |
| Coconut Oil | $/MT | 630.0 | 634.3 | 685.3 | 693.0 | 686.0 | 677.0 |
| Groundnut Oil | $/MT | 1023.0 | 973.0 | 976.7 | 969.0 | 980.0 | 981.0 |
| *Soybean Oil | $/MT | 663.0 | 605.3 | 618.7 | 626.0 | 616.0 | 614.0 |
| Soybeans | $/MT | 242.3 | 250.3 | 261.3 | 261.0 | 257.0 | 266.0 |
| Copra | $/MT | 412.7 | 416.0 | 452.0 | 448.0 | 458.0 | 450.0 |
| Groundnut Meal | $/MT | 167.3 | 156.7 | 166.0 | 163.0 | 165.0 | 170.0 |
| Soybean Meal | $/MT | 181.0 | 180.7 | 196.3 | 193.0 | 190.0 | 206.0 |
| **FISHERIES** | | | | | | | |
| *Shrimp | ¢/KG | 1372.9 | 1464.7 | 1340.4 | 1455.1[G] | 1344.8 | 1221.4 |
| *Fish Meal | $/MT | 439.7 | 450.0 | 500.0 | 502.0 | 493.0 | 505.0 |
| **FIBERS** | | | | | | | |
| Cotton | ¢/KG | 225.7 | 234.7 | 193.7 | 192.6 | 187.5 | 201.0 |
| Jute | $/MT | 256.7 | 330.2 | 418.7 | 400.0 | 410.0 | 446.0 |
| *Sisal | $/MT | 687.5 | 700.0 | 715.8 | 702.5 | 715.0 | 730.0 |
| *Wool | ¢/KG | 502.8 | 512.8 | 487.9 | 505.5[G] | 0.0[B] | 470.3[G] |
| **RUBBER** | | | | | | | |
| RSS1: Malaysia | ¢/KG | 173.9 | 170.1 | 132.6 | 133.4 | 129.8 | 134.7 |
| *Singapore | ¢/KG | 177.3 | 172.6 | 134.6 | 134.7 | 131.9 | 137.1 |
| *US | ¢/KG | 200.3 | 193.7 | 155.1 | 158.5 | 151.1 | 155.9 |

# COMMODITY PRICE DATA

| Commodity | Unit | QUARTERLY AVERAGES Jan-Mar 1995 | Apr-June 1995 | July-Sept 1995 | MONTHLY AVERAGES July 1995 | Aug 1995 | Sept 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| METALS & MINERALS | | | | | | | |
| Aluminum | $/MT | 1927.3 | 1797.2 | 1836.4 | 1860.1 | 1888.3 | 1760.8 |
| Copper | $/MT | 2936.9 | 2890.5 | 3009.3 | 3075.7 | 3036.8 | 2915.5 |
| Nickel | $/MT | 8543.3 | 7500.5 | 8648.8 | 8596.6 | 8944.7 | 8405.2 |
| Tin | ¢/KG | 573.7 | 615.6 | 666.3 | 666.9 | 699.2 | 632.8 |
| Lead | ¢/KG | 61.1 | 60.6 | 61.3 | 62.2 | 62.4 | 59.3 |
| Zinc | ¢/KG | 107.0 | 103.6 | 100.9 | 102.7 | 101.4 | 98.6 |
| *Gold | $/TOZ | 379.1 | 387.9 | 384.3 | 386.2 | 383.7 | 383.1 |
| *Silver | ¢/TOZ | 470.2 | 547.6 | 532.7 | 517.6 | 539.6 | 540.8 |
| Iron Ore | $/MT | 27.0 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 27.0 | 27.0 |
| Steel: *Rebar | $/MT | 346.7 | 410.0 | 390.0 | 400.0 | 390.0 | 380.0 |
| *Wire Rod | $/MT | 366.7 | 426.7 | 433.3 | 430.0 | 420.0 | 450.0 |
| *HR Coilsheet | $/MT | 416.7 | 453.3 | 466.7 | 480.0 | 470.0 | 450.0 |
| *CR Coilsheet | $/MT | 526.7 | 560.0 | 576.7 | 580.0 | 580.0 | 570.0 |
| ENERGY | | | | | | | |
| Crude Oil: | | | | | | | |
| **Spot, average | $/BBL | 17.2 | 18.1 | 16.5 | 16.1 | 16.5 | 16.8 |
| **Brent | $/BBL | 16.9 | 18.1 | 16.2 | 15.9 | 16.1 | 16.8 |
| **Dubai | $/BBL | 16.4 | 17.0 | 15.3 | 15.0 | 15.4 | 15.6 |
| **West Texas Int | $/BBL | 18.2 | 19.3 | 17.8 | 17.4 | 18.0 | 18.0 |
| Coal: *Australia | $/MT | 37.7 | 38.9 | 41.0 | 41.0 | 40.9 | 40.9 |
| *US | $/MT | 41.2 | 40.5 | 38.6 | 40.0 | 38.7 | 37.0 |
| Natural Gas: *Europe | $/MMBTU | 2.7 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| *US | $/MMBTU | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| TIMBER | | | | | | | |
| Logs: *Cameroon | $/CUM | 340.7 | 345.8 | 343.6 | 351.8 | 342.0 | 337.1 |
| Malaysia | $/CUM | 261.1 | 286.9 | 239.6 | 259.6 | 235.7 | 223.5 |
| Sawnwood: *Ghana | $/CUM | 651.1 | 648.7 | 640.3 | 675.8 | 631.9 | 613.2 |
| *Malaysia | $/CUM | 753.5 | 746.9 | 740.9 | 752.3 | 741.7 | 728.7 |
| *Plywood | ¢/SH | 602.2 | 642.5 | 557.6 | 584.7 | 560.6 | 527.4.0 |
| *Woodpulp | $/MT | 736.3 | 835.0 | 901.3 | 910.5 | 896.6 | 896.6 |
| FERTILIZERS | | | | | | | |
| Phosphate Rock | $/MT | 35.0 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 35.0 |
| *DAP | $/MT | 215.0 | 196.8 | 210.7 | 202.5 | 207.2 | 222.3 |
| *Potassium Chloride | $/MT | 114.8 | 118.3 | 119.0 | 119.0 | 119.0 | 119.0 |
| *TSP | $/MT | 145.8 | 147.5 | 147.5 | 147.5 | 147.5 | 147.5 |
| *Urea | $/MT | 224.3 | 195.3 | 197.3 | 185.0E | 196.5E | 210.5E |
| SELECTED PRICE INDICES (1990=100) | | | | | | | |
| Agriculture | | 136.4 | 134.9 | 128.0 | 129.2 | 128.7 | 126.1 |
| Fats and Oils | | 135.1 | 131.0 | 136.1 | 138.5 | 134.2 | 135.6 |
| Other Food | | 100.4 | 98.8 | 100.9 | 104.5 | 101.0 | 97.2 |
| Agri. Timber | | 142.1 | 143.1 | 138.5 | 141.8 | 138.3 | 135.3 |
| Metals and Minerals (excl. steel) | | 103.6 | 100.2 | 103.7 | 105.0 | 105.6 | 100.6 |
| Steel Products | | 98.4 | 109.8 | 111.3 | 113.1 | 111.2 | 109.8 |
| Non-fuel commodities (excl. steel) | | 126.2 | 124.3 | 120.5 | 121.7 | 121.5 | 118.3 |

A = not available B = no quotation E = Estimate G = Average for less than period indicates.
$ = US dollar; kg=Kilogram; mt=metric ton; toz=troy oz; bbl=barrel; cum=cubic meter; mmbtu=million British thermal units. *= Not included in index; ** = included in the petroleum index, but not in the non-fuel index. Journalists may obtain more detailed information about commodities by writing to the World Bank, Commodity Policy and Analysis Unit, Room R2-072, Washington, D.C. 20433 tel. (202) 473-3862, fax (202) 477-0569.

### ARGENTINA

The government of Argentina has requested that a portion of a $2.45 billion emergency loan from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank be directed toward protecting and improving federal social programs. Correspondingly, the World Bank approved a loan of $152 million on November 21 for the ministries of economy, education and culture, labor and social security and the Social Development Secretariat for projects to raise the efficiency of social programs over the next two to three years, to benefit more than three million poor people, primarily mothers and children. An additional pilot Participatory Social Investment Fund would benefit some 70,000 poor families in northern Argentina.

Also on November 21, the World Bank approved a $16 million loan to Argentina for a project to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the government's public spending management, by improving its investment process, strengthening project analysis capabilities and building up project and program evaluation capacity. The project would finance seminars, courses and workshops for senior officials and decision-makers; technical assistance to investment agencies; studies in sectoral investment strategies; support for the preparation of a national public investment plan and for project administration. For more information, call Mario del Carril at (202) 473-6189, fax (202) 522-3698.

### TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

A $51 million loan for a basic education project in Trinidad and Tobago was approved by the World Bank November 16. The project is part of a poverty and human resources development program and includes four components: school repairs and maintenance; increasing access for the poorest children to new early childhood and education centers; training programs for teachers; and institutional strengthening of the national educational council. Beneficiaries include the ministry of education, regional divisions, public and government-assisted schools and pre-schools operated by nongovernmental organizations. For more information, call Mario del Carril at (202) 473-6189, fax (202) 522-3698.

### VIET NAM

The International Development Association (IDA) on November 21 approved a credit of $49 million for Viet Nam to assist in the development of a modern banking sector capable of servicing the needs of the country's growing economy. The concessional loan will consist of national and commercial inter-bank payment clearing and settlement systems for inter- and intra-provincial bank payments; institutional strengthening of commercial banks; and project management support in the form of technical assistance and equipment. Six commercial banks, accounting for 90 percent of the banking sector, will participate in the project, in addition to the State Bank of Viet Nam. For more information, call Graham Barrett at (202) 458-0344, fax (202) 522-3405.

### IFC IN CENTRAL EUROPE

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) signed financing agreements on November 13 to establish the Central Europe Telecommunications Agency Line, a $100 million agency line that will provide loan and quasi-equity financing in US dollars and local currencies for private telecommunications companies in the region. Four regional banks, as well as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, are also funding the line. Through the new line, private operators who have obtained licenses from governments to build and operate regional and specialized networks will provide basic and specialized services such as data networks, paging and cable television. Many of these new networks are expected to be small, with financing needs ranging from $10 to $50 million. For more information, call Amy Conran at (202) 473-9119, fax (202) 676-0365.

### IFC IN PHILIPPINES

IFC signed an agreement with the Philippine government November 10 to act as lead adviser on the privatization of the state-owned water supply, treatment and distribution utility, which provides services to the six cities and 31 municipalities within metropolitan Manila, an area comprising 11 million residents.The project is the first large-scale water privatization in Asia. The government's decision to privatize the utility is part of a wider initiative to tackle an impending water supply crisis in the country that could become as serious as the 1990-91 power crisis.

IFC will prepare the utility for privatization, design an operating and investment agreement, coordinate and integrate the work of all consultants and supervise the competitive bidding procedures that will bring international operators and investors into the sector. For more information, call L. Joseph at (202) 473-7700, fax (202) 676-0365.

| Date | Event | Sponsor | Location | Telephone |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *NOVEMBER* | | | | |
| 30-Dec. 1 | Donors' Meeting for Viet Nam | World Bank | Paris | (33-1)40693011 |
| *DECEMBER* | | | | |
| 1 | World AIDS Day | | | |
| 4-6 | Seventh Annual Meeting of the Governing Council | Common Fund for Commodities | Amsterdam | (020) 6646409 |
| 5 | Presentation: The World Bank and Global Economy | The Atlanta Roundtable | Atlanta | (202)473-2763* |
| 5 | Presentation by Jean-Francois Rischard, World Bank: Forces Shaping the World Economy | Conference of World Regions | San Juan | (202)473-2785 |
| 10 | Seminar on Savings Behavior and Products | Epargne Sans Frontière/ Centre National des Caisses d'Epargne et de Prevoyance | Paris | (33-1)4800-9682 |
| 12-13 | World Bank Japan Research Fair | World Bank and Japanese Development Organizations | Tokyo | (202)473-7465* |
| 13 | Seminar: Water Conservation and Reuse—The Case of the Middle East and North Africa | World Bank | Washington | (202)473-2318* |
| 14-16 | Promoting a Global Partnership: A Conference to Promote US-Japanese NGO Networks on Population and Development | Population Reference Bureau | Washington | (202)483-1100* |

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Stefano Petrucci, Editor
Cynthia Delgadillo, Production Assistant

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